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Letter dated 28 August 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I transmit to you herewith the statement regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017) and 2401 (2018) (S/2018/707), which concern the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, that I was to deliver at the 8332nd meeting of the Security Council, which was convened on 28 August 2018 to consider the item on the situation in the Middle East.

I should like to thank the President of the Security Council for referring to the two letters that we addressed to the President and the members of the Council regarding the question of chemical weapons (S/2018/630) and the serious threat posed by the possibility that such weapons might be used again in Idlib. In response to the questions that were posed to me by the President, I should like to note that are many important points that need to be clarified.

To begin, I should like to draw attention to the following:

- As the report of Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) was being written, the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates approved 2,700 requests from the World Food Programme (WFP) to deliver assistance to liberated and other areas. That is to say, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has approved all the 2,700 requests that WFP submitted.

- In August, we circulated a detailed explanation of the meaning and purpose of Act No. 10 to the members of the Security Council and Member States, thereby putting the lie to all the malicious falsehoods and misinformation that are being circulated periodically regarding the aims of the Act. This matter should therefore no longer be a topic of discussion.

- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent continues to work, every day, with its local and international humanitarian partners to deliver assistance. Dozens of convoys have reached areas where the inhabitants need such assistance. Our problem with OCHA is that Mr. John Ging, Director of its Division for Operations and Advocacy, has said that only four convoys were approved. That is incorrect. The problem is that OCHA only counts those convoys in which it takes part. For example, they do not take into account WFP, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or Red Cross convoys. That is why OCHA does not count or mention in its reports the hundreds, indeed thousands, of tons of aid that is sent to areas where the population needs assistance. That is why OCHA

only mentions four convoys in this month's report. That is not only incorrect, but also misleads the members of the Security Council.

We have warned many times about the presence of a huge, unruly elephant in this chamber that threatens the foundations of our joint efforts and tramples under its huge feet many facts, in order to cover up the reality that certain permanent members of the Council are violating the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

It also appears that the governments of certain Western States are adamant about pursuing their misguided polices towards my country. Instead of admitting guilt and taking political and legal responsibility for waging a terrorist war against the Syrian State and people, and instead of correcting the disastrous policies that they have pursued with regard to our region, in general, and with regard to my country, in particular, those Governments continue to commit acts of aggression with their black banners, White Helmets and red lines. They are currently preparing to stage another bloody incident by using chemical weapons in north-western Syria. Their aim is to impede the ongoing political process and justify aggression by Western countries that are Council members against my country, with a view to occupying parts of it and boosting the morale and determination of what remains of the terrorist groups in those areas.

My Government condemns and rejects both the form and substance of the statement that the United States of America, France and the United Kingdom issued a few days ago. Syria has repeatedly underscored that it considers the use of chemical weapons to be immoral, and condemns their use anywhere, under any circumstances and against whomsoever. Syria once again reiterates that it does not possess any chemical weapons. It has fulfilled all its obligations towards the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which has informed international bodies, including the Security Council, that Syria has fulfilled its obligations in that regard. There is no need for reiterate, at every meeting, that the Syrian chemical-weapon stockpile was destroyed on the United States vessel *MV Cape Ray* in the Mediterranean Sea. Meanwhile, we await the approval of the Council for Israeli stockpiles of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons to be destroyed.

I should now like to put to you documented information regarding the preparations that are being made by the terrorists of the Nusrah Front and affiliated groups to use chemical weapons against civilians in Idlib governorate, with a view to accusing Syrian forces and justifying any military aggression by the Governments of the States that control those terrorist groups. That is what happened during the American attack against the Sha'irat airbase on 7 April 2017 and the tripartite American-British-French aggression that occurred on 14 April 2018.

We strongly call upon those States that have influence over the terrorists to prevent their agents from committing this crime. In that connection, it should be noted that eight containers of chlorine were transferred to the village of Halluz, Idlib governorate, in preparation for the execution of a new, staged chemical attack in which Turkistan Islamic Party and Nusrah Front terrorists, whom the authors of the Secretariat report see fit to designate as the "non-State armed opposition", will use toxic chemicals against civilians, including dozens of children, who were abducted a few days ago from the countryside of Aleppo and Idlib, and then accuse the Syrian Government in order to incite an attack against it.

Any aggression against my country that might occur would be an act of aggression against a founding Member of the United Nations, and an attack on regional and international peace and security. It would also amount to support for terrorism and an attack against the efforts that we are making with our allies to counter terrorism. The aggressors should, of course, be aware that what goes around comes around.

My Government regrets that the authors of the Secretariat reports continue to take a negative and politicized approach that is biased and unprofessional. For example, the fifty-fourth report contains no reference at all to the serious violation of the separation of forces agreement that occurred recently in the occupied Syrian Golan. My Government sees no reason for the Secretariat and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to ignore the involvement of Israel in the operation to evacuate and smuggle White Helmet terrorists across the line of separation in the occupied Syrian Golan to Jordan, and then on to the capitals of the Western States that support those terrorists. My Government also sees no reason to ignore the fact that the Turkish Government is supporting the terrorists of the White Helmets, the Turkistan Islamic Party, the Nusrah Front and the Levant Liberation Organization, as well Uighur and Uzbek terrorists and other "moderates", nor the fact that the Turkish Government is directly facilitating their activities in Syria.

My Government condemns and rejects any passage in the report commending Turkey for providing aid to the city of Afrin and other areas. It also reminds everyone that the Turkish military aggression against the cities of Afrin, Jarabulus, Bab and Ayn al-Arab, as well as other parts of Syria, directly caused the displacement and suffering of hundreds of thousands of civilians. In fact, the Turkish military presence is an occupation that must end, and it is meant to support the terrorism perpetrated by the armed terrorist groups that are present in those areas.

My Government pays no heed to any politicized terms used by the authors, including the redesignation of certain areas of Syria from "besieged" to "hard-to-reach", or some other designation. It should like to reaffirm that it responds to all Syrians, in keeping with its national role and its aim of meeting the needs of all Syrians without discrimination. I should also like to reaffirm that all the areas liberated by the Syrian State from terrorists are now open areas and can be reached by the United Nations and humanitarian partners that truly and sincerely want to provide humanitarian support to Syrians without discrimination, restrictions or conditions The Syrian Arab Republic wishes to correct the phrasing used by the authors: there are still parts of Syria that are under siege by armed terrorist groups, which are besieging civilians from inside cities and preventing them from leaving and denying them humanitarian assistance. This, for example, is currently the case in Idlib, where millions of civilians are besieged from within.

My Government has drawn attention, and I have drawn the attention of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Mark Lowcock, from the time that he assumed his post, to the pressing need to address the repercussions of the unilateral coercive economic measures that the Governments of certain States have imposed on the Syrian people. Quite simply and frankly, we have yet to find a justification for the introduction of military and political issues into a monthly report on the humanitarian situation. The pretext given is that those issues are within the scope of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Meanwhile, no mention is made of the serious adverse effects of the illegal economic blockade imposed on Syria, a blockade that directly affects the activities of the United Nations and efforts to meet the basic needs of Syrians.

I call upon the Secretariat and Mr. Lowcock to work earnestly with the Syrian Government, with a view to starting a new and constructive phase of humanitarian work in Syria. Doing so would help start the reconstruction process and give impetus to development and recovery efforts, free from American-Western extortion. I will say this frankly: the time has come for the Secretariat to disassociate itself from the "secret document" that sets out the vision and recommendations of the former Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, regarding the guidelines for humanitarian work in Syria, and from the outcomes of the Brussels conference, which tied contributions made for reconstruction and development to political conditions

that are contrary to the true principles of humanitarian work and that run counter to the "leave no one behind" principle that governs development work.

Finally, in response to the recommendations of the Secretary-General, I should like to assure him and all of you that we are serious about following through on a political process that is led by Syrians alone, without external interference. We are furthermore determined to restore security and stability, preserve the sovereignty and independence of the Syrian Arab Republic and its territorial unity and integrity, and ensure that all refugees and displaced Syrians can return to their homes in dignity and safety. To that end, the Syrian Commission for Coordinating the Return of Refugees and Displaced Persons was recently established, in order to take the necessary measures in that regard.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative